CONFIDENTIAL

Wilmington New-Journal Story on Mark Crouch 7/7/91 7/10/91

This story confirms what I've heard from Harry Livingstone, directly and indirectly, but adds what I do not recall hearing, the part about Jim Fox and his Chestertown general store. It also does not include what Livingstone says, that Crouch has been selling prints at $50 per print.

When Tom Kelley was Secret Service Inspector he gave me in writing an account of the printing of these autopsy photos and I used it in Post Mortem. I'm not checking for the details. But Fox did handle that so how he could have had a set of these pictures is explained by what Kelley wrote me. I have no reason to believe that Kelley knew or approved Fox having a personal set of them. I am inclined to believe the opposite.

Livingstone says that a Baltimore police photo expert also says there is airbrushing on that particular view, back of the head.

As I think about this two elements appear to be rather strange to me. One is that after retiring from the Secret Service, and with an expertise in photography, Fox decided he wanted to spend the rest of his life running a general store. The other is that for any reason at all he had and preserved a copy of Adolph Hitler's will. Fox's retirement should have been adequate for a comfortable life and running a general store entails both financial risk and a lack of freedom. It requires that he be there every day.

Crouch is wrong, as are all those who develop theories based on these pictures in their uses of and theorizing about them, in stating that the pictures and X-rays support the conclusions of the Warren Commission. They do not. A hole in the back of the head would tend to support the Warren Commission on that detail. So, the airbrushing cannot have been done to support the official solution.

Assuming there was airbrushing, as I think about who did it Fox is the most obvious likelihood. It could not have been done at the Naval hospital because the film left there exposed but undeveloped. From the Kelley account, which makes sense and I believe, they were not developed until Dox took them to the Navy lab for developing. Thus he was then in a position to steal and then airbrush and with the set he has, from which all known copies in private hands seem to come, it seems that he alone could have done the airbrushing. It is apparent that on the official prints, which were made available to the House Select Committee on Assassinations, if the official set had been doctored this would show on the copies made by Medical Artist Ida Dox, if I recall her name correctly.

Why Fox did any airbrushing can on the basis of having no knowledge be conjectured only. But I believe that his having a copy of Adolph Hitler's will may be a clue. He did it and he made copies available for mischief, mischief for which he would not be held to account with no uses of these pictures until after his death.

Kelley also is dead and can't be consulted on this. So are Kellerman and Greer.

Fox knew that his having a set was wrong. He knew also that letting anyone have copies

also was wrong. He had every reason to believe that if it were known that he had a set it could mean trouble for him, whether or not it would lead to any punishment. I think that it had to be in his mind that his pension might be jeopardized.

The only apparent reason for what he did was to make trouble, perhaps for the government, perhaps for the Kennedy family, perhaps both. Or the country, too. He succeeded.

None of this is inconsistent with his having gotten and preserved along with his marriage license and these prints all together, a copy of Hitler's will.

The nature of what is described as Crouch's "research" is I think indicated by where he sat with his album of prints for a photograph for a story that was going to refer to him as a researcher. It appears to be in his basement shop.

The story refers to only three documents that he has and shows, all readily available from Fletcher Prouty and the published Pentagon Papers. So, his decade of "research" includes no actual documents about the assassination.

The story quotes Crouch as being one of a dozen researchers "tapped by director Oliver Stone to supply information for Stone's upcoming film, 'JFK'." There is no "information" he can give Stone. If he is telling the truth, and there is no apparent reason to think otherwise, then the only apparent reason for Stone's paying him any money for anything at all was for the use of these pronts. That I believe Fox doctored for mischief.

A paragrpah in the story reflects that Crouch is so ignorant of the subject matter that he is not familiar with the basic literature. That paragrpah reads:"An early version of the film script has been leaked to the press by disgruntled JFK theorists, Crouch said."

Aside from the fact that this would appear to come from Stone or someone speaking for him, anyone at all familiar with the literature knows that I have never espoused any theory and have devoted much time and effort to debunking many of them.

A minor detail is that I didn't "leak" it. I gave it, for attribution, not in secret. I know of no story based on the script other than Lardner's. Time mention it but Time got its copy from a literary agent in New York.

Moreover, I am not one of those theoriests to whom he refers who scrap with each other over their theories. So, unless he made this part up, Stone fed it to him and probably to others he did not want to quit his project.

Lil checked our list. We got no orders from Crouch. Neither can remember any orders from any Chestertown bookstore, if there is one.New Castle, where Crouch lives, a suburb of Wilmington or West Chester, where he works, may have ordered a book or two but we have no recollection of any doing so.

Further illustrating Crouch's ignorance of the field is his statement that "the complete, unedited version" of the Zapruder film "was not shown complete until 1975." Aside from the few frames missing from the original, there is no version that is not "complete" and it has been "shown" in the National Archives I think since 1965 and I know since 1966.

He is quite wrong in saying that until 1975, the thrust of this, it was not known that JFK's body goes violently backward during the shooting, immediatelt before, as he does not say, going violently forward. I may not have been the first to observe it but it was in Whitewash when I completed that manuscript in mid-February, 1965, and used it in Whitewash II in 1966. I observed this clearly by study of the published frames in the 26 volumes.

Crouch is quoted as saying, "Everybody talks about the wound on the back of the head." False. First - don't and second there was no wound there, as I brought to light in Post Mortem. It was four inches higher than the Commission said. (Of course, he may talk only to conspiracy nuts and they may talk about the wound where it wasn't.)

So, airbrushing the wound out did the opposite of serving the Commission's interest- if pictures originally showed it there, which is not possible. A wound there supported the official explanation. Eliminating it had the opposite effect.

(I have no knowledge of airbrushing and unless it were gross would not perceive it. Livingstone tried to show this to me on his set and I could not see it. What he showed me I could explain to myself as a difference in darkness of the hair that could be attributed to shadow, moisture or both.)

He describes Groden as "a major researcher on Stone's" film.

Aside from Ted Gandolfo's telling me that Paul Hock is working for Stone, and I've not asked Paul to confirm it, I have yet to hear a name of any of those Stone refers to as respected researchers who has any actual subject-matter respectability at all. (All of Groden's photographic work of which I know is impeccable. he did his original work on the Zapruder film at my request and brought it here weekly for me to examine it. But his theorizing is wild, his coauthored books which I believe he did not in any degree write use the material of others, not infsequently uncredited - Model just stole from me - and his credentials are better than those of the Dallas nuts Stone hired. Except that Gary Shaw does know more about the official documents. But he was steadfast in his support of Ricky White when it was obvious that White's story is false. Shaw also participated in a press conference with Joe West saying that three top mafia characters were on the Grassy knoll. Larry Howard of the Dallas nuttery boasted to George Lardner that he had never read any book on the assassination. This is a ghastly aspect of what Stone is up to.

But whether or not he uses the prints in his movie, he cannot have any other use from Crouch.

Crouch is quoted as saying "his" theory is that the military-industrial complex did it. His? Not Garrison's and that of many others?

He doesn't even identify the "documents" he showed the reporter as what at least two are, NSAMs, or National Security Action Memoranda, 263 and 273. I do not recall what the draft of 11/21/63 is but it has to be misrepresented. First the conspirators had no need to make and have available for detection any draft of any changes in NSAM 263 until after

the assassination, especially when it was only a day before, and secondly, until they got the job done they would not have been able to use it. Having such a draft of that date of anything counter to what JFK had said and said he wanted was to self-indict if the job were done incompetently or for any other reason failed. It simply makes no sense. I heard the same thing from Prouty, so I presume Prouty is Crouch's source as he will be Stone's. No need, why risk?

Every part of this is sick! And so amateurish!

But Fox is a different story. Bad boy!

This business of airbrushing runs into a problem. Groden is a fine expert in the technical aspects. He has long said that the picture Crouch refers to was touched up by inerting a piece of a different picture of that part of a head. He refers to a "matte line." I can't imagine that there was any airbrushing Groden did not detect immediately that Crouch and Livingstone could.

What is clear to me in all of this is that Stone is not innocent. With the possible and unconfirmed exception of Hoch Stone has hired as his "experts" those he knows are idiots on this subject, the most irresponsible nuts. To me this leaves it without doubt that he began with the intent to exploit and commercialize. He has no other need for any of them, Marrs included. There is nothing new in Marrs stupid compendium of nutty theories. It is a book Stone can cite and the use in the book obviates any probelms from those who invented the theories. Stone could not have had any more positive proof that the Dallas gang is sick and undependable. That is obvious by their sponsorship of Ricky White and their persistence in endorsing that palpable fraud after its true character was long apparent. Stone also know they did not checking on White at all. But he can use the name of their "center." Stone can't use the Zapruder film without paying for it so he has no real need for Groden, if he uses the film or not, other than to exploit his connection with HSCA.

What a disgusting mess! How sordid!

Bearing further on Stone and the obviousness of his purposes, exploitation, commercialization and personal benefit with this ugly thing he says comes from his "love" of JFK and his laughing on th this assembly of ignoramuses and nuts is he effort to buy the rights to Sylvia Meagher's superb book. She had willed those rights to Oreg Stone. When he asked my advice my instinctive reaction, knowing then nothing at all about this film, is that there was nothing in Sylvia's book he had to buy to use therefore he was buying the right to trade on and exploit her name, her fine reputation in the field. The first deaft of the script confirms this beyond any question. The script cannot be revised enough to make thid untrue. For it not to be true Stone would have had to junk the script and start all over again. The monster scavenges even the grave!

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